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JCS PASS J-5/CDR S. WRIGHT

E.O. 12958: N/A  
TAGS: [OPRC](#) [KMDR](#) [TU](#)  
SUBJECT: ANKARA MEDIA REACTION REPORT  
THURSDAY, NOVEMBER 20, 2008

In Today's Papers

U.S.-Iraq-Turkey Trilateral Meeting in Baghdad  
The U.S., Turkey, and Iraq agreed in Baghdad to form a joint committee to block the activities and cut logistical support lines for the PKK in northern Iraq. Most media outlets cover the developments from yesterday's trilateral meeting in Baghdad in a positive manner, though the nationalist media remains skeptical of the Kurdish Regional Governments' (KRG) intentions regarding the PKK and highlight their skepticism by criticizing the inclusion of an attendee who allegedly had past links to the PKK. Islamist-oriented Zaman reports in, "A Trilateral Committee Is Established in Order to Block PKK Activities on the Border," that President Gul welcomed the news and told journalists, "A withdrawal of U.S. forces from Iraq will not affect the steps forward we have taken with Iraq." In addition, Zaman notes, "Ankara is preparing to host Iraqi FM Hosyar Zebari in December." Liberal Radikal draws positive attention to the fact that "the Kurdish Regional Administration has joined official talks aimed at blocking the activities of the PKK in northern Iraq." Mainstream Aksam reports, "The committee will hold monthly meetings," and "this marks a turning point in ties between northern Iraq and Turkey." Nevertheless, Aksam notes that, despite the fact there was an official statement from the Iraqi Foreign Ministry regarding the meetings, "no MOU emerged from this six-hour meeting" because "towards the end of the meeting, one of the KRG officials demanded that Turkey withdraw all of its troops from northern Iraq."

Meanwhile, leftist-nationalist Cumhuriyet notes that one participant in the meeting, Karim Sinjari, was once declared persona non grata in Turkey. Sinjari is KRG President Massoud Barzani's former intelligence chief, and Turkey objected to Sinjari's alleged former ties to the PKK. Cumhuriyet's headline reads, "Sinjari, Persona Non Grata, Attends the Trilateral Meetings," while conservative-nationalist Turkiye carries the headline, "Shame! Interior Minister Atalay Sat at the Table with Sinjari."

Turkey's Political and Business Leaders Discuss Global Financial Crisis  
Media outlets report that at a meeting of Foreign Capital

Association (YASED) yesterday, Prime Minister Erdogan warned banks against early termination of credit deals with clients are having trouble making their payments. Erdogan stressed that nobody should be allowed to manipulate the economic crisis in order to make extra profits. Before the YASED gathering, Prime Minister Erdogan announced at a meeting of his ruling party board that Turkey and the IMF were close to sealing an agreement. The PM said he expects the IMF to lend Turkey between USD 20-40 billion.

Meanwhile, Deputy PM Nazim Ekren, State Minister Mehmet Simsek, Industry Minister Zafer Caglayan as well as market representatives from around Turkey came together yesterday at the fifth meeting of Turkish Trade and Industry Council to discuss remedies in the face of the global financial crisis. Ekren said his government's program for 2009 contains all the necessary measures to cope with the crisis. The Turkish Union of Chambers (TOBB) chairman Rifat Hisarciklioglu asked the government to inject money to the markets. "The crisis has turned from the financial sector to real sector, and from developed countries to developing ones. A storm is looming step by step," emphasized Hisarciklioglu. He also asked the government to revise its 2009 budget as well as its midterm economic program, stressing Turkey needed a new growth strategy. "The crisis will continue at least for another 1.5 years," Hisarciklioglu said.

On the other hand, business world representatives met yesterday with Industry Minister Zafer Caglayan in Istanbul. Turkey's leading business group Koc conglomerate's honorary chairman Rahmi Koc underlined Turkish markets' need for fresh money, and called on the government to help by injecting funds. Koc stressed Turkey

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desperately needed foreign capital, and urged the government to do all it could to lure foreign investors into the country.

#### Editorial Commentary on Global Economic Crisis Effecting Turkey

Cuneyt Ulsever wrote in mainstream Hurriyet: "Turkish politics is going through a significant change and the formation of new political alliances is ahead. The prime minister has lost his image as someone to be trusted. He stumbles through both the economic crisis and the Kurdish issue. First he criticized the IMF for imposing its conditions on Turkey's economic policy, but shortly thereafter he decided to reach an agreement with the IMF. Also, he does not have any problem getting closer to Iraqi KRG President Massoud Barzani yet at the same time he acts like a hawk towards the Kurds in his own country."

Gungor Mengi wrote in mainstream Vatan: "Turkey's biggest problem during the economic crisis process will definitely be its irritable Prime Minister. It is obvious that PM Erdogan is not aware of the seriousness of the economic crisis. In his return from the G-20 meeting, everyone expected some concrete explanations from him but all he said was "this government is not going to fill anyone's empty coffers." No one is asking the government to fill up their coffers. The business world is seeking immediate measures, and the business world is more concerned about the PM's rhetoric rather than the economic crisis."

Mustafa Balbay in leftist-nationalist Cumhuriyet: "The 2001 economic crisis struck the public sector and the public banks; today the private sector is affected the most. This economic crisis could bring irreversible losses, such as Vestel. Vestel, a Turkish television and computer technologies producer, has shut down its laptop production unit. Vestel was the only Turkish laptop producer. The last crisis led to panic among Vestel's stockholders, leaving Vestel with no option other than to shrink its operations. Today, creating a brand value has become more important than creating industrial facilities. France has launched an aid package to protect its brands whereas our government cannot even stand to hear complaints from anyone."

U.S. Expected to Transfer Troops from Iraq to Afghanistan  
Mainstream Hurriyet and Milliyet report the U.S. army will initiate a withdrawal from Iraq after the Obama administration takes charge. Forces that are withdrawn from Iraq are expected to be moved to

Afghanistan. In, "The Pentagon's Plan via Turkey" by Hurriyet and "U.S. Forces May Be Moved to Afghanistan" by Milliyet, both papers indicate Chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff Admiral Mike Mullen said Turkey and Jordan will be used as transit routes for the withdrawal of U.S. troops, and based on instructions from President Bush and plans by President-elect Obama, the Pentagon has made preparations to proceed with the plan. Hurriyet also noted that Admiral Mullen earlier criticized Barack Obama's plans to withdraw from Iraq.

A Major and Two Soldiers Killed in Clashes with the PKK  
All papers: A gendarmerie major is killed and five soldiers injured in a clash between security forces and PKK terrorists in the eastern province of Agri yesterday. Two more soldiers lost their lives in a separate clash at the Lice district of Diyarbakir and four others were injured.

Guler: Iran Energy Deal Will Not Create Tensions with the U.S.  
Conservative-nationalist Turkiye quotes the Turkish Energy Minister Guler in the front page headline, "Our Energy Deal with Iran Will Not Trigger Fresh Tensions with the U.S." Mainstream Sabah reports Guler told journalists, "Turkish officials are explaining our needs for natural gas to American officials," while liberal Radikal notes, "MOE officials are also highlighting the fact that this cooperation will provide Europe with much-needed natural gas," and "there are hopes that the Obama administration will understand." Guler also

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noted Iran was speeding up the construction of a separate natural gas pipeline along its border with Turkey.

Meanwhile, papers report that on Wednesday, Turkish Petroleum Corp. (TPAO) signed a "Joint Operations Agreement" with ExxonMobil for the exploration and development of oil and natural gas in Black Sea. TPAO thinks the Black Sea may hold 10 billion barrels of oil, which would make Turkey energy independent for fifty years. Production is expected to begin by 2015.

Editorial Commentary on Turkish Democracy-Political Parties

Mumtazer Turkone in Islamist-oriented Zaman: "The MHP's 'Alevi opening' is important, and the Alevis must respond to Devlet Bahceli's remarks that the MHP is ready to contribute to a resolution of the problems of Alevi citizens. Also, the MHP must give its grassroots the message that Kurds must be approached with empathy. It's inevitable that the leader of the ruling AKP will also be part of this approach. The CHP must convince its voters that the headscarf is not a threat against the regime. In Turkey, democracy is mobilizing the political parties towards pulling together and resolving problems."

Editorial Commentary on President Elect Obama/Africa; Iran's nuclear power

Akif Emre wrote in Islamist oriented Yeni Safak: "It is quite possible that the U.S. is going to open a new front in the war on terror in Africa, which will eventually make Obama like Bush. Given the region's oil reserves, Africa has become a center for global competition, particularly between China and America, and the new Obama administration seems ready to move forward toward gaining full control of Africa. It is not just a coincidence to see an armed insurgency in oil-rich areas of Sudan. Sudan was made for military intervention."

Kadri Gursel wrote in mainstream Milliyet: "When I criticize the PM's support of Iran, the Islamist media angrily questions me saying, 'If Iran's nuclear weapons are considered a threat, why aren't Israel's nuclear weapons considered a threat?' My answer is 'If Iran owns nuclear weapons within 3-5 years, it will become a super power and will push Turkey into a marginal and ineffective position in the region. Despite its nuclear power, Israel never had such affects on Turkey. Moreover, following Iran's nuclear power, if Turkey starts seeking the same kind of power then Turkey will be considered as a threat in the region and our relationship with the West will be damaged tragically. Your ideological obsessions definitely blinded you and that is why you are getting ready to

welcome the first Islamic nuclear power without thinking of the negative impact it will have on Turkey. And that is why I am calling you all 'the Iranians among us.'"

TV News:  
CNN Turk

#### Domestic News

- Opposition MHP lawmaker and former ambassador Gunduz Aktan died of cancer in Ankara.
- The Education Ministry recruits imams to give compulsory religious education to elementary school students in Izmir.
- On November 23, the pro-Kurdish DTP will launch a tour of provinces in eastern Turkey.

#### International News

- The Turkey-EU joint consultative committee meetings in Paris has called on EU term president France to open new negotiating chapters

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with Turkey without delay.

- A French parliamentary committee unanimously agrees not to endorse parliament's prior recognition of genocide claims.
- Al-Qaeda's number two in command Ayman Zawahiri warns Barack Obama, calling the U.S. President-elect a "house negro," against sending more troops to Afghanistan.

SILLIMAN